



CONNECTICUT STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

February 15, 2011

Senator Joan Hartley, Co-Chair Public Safety & Security Committee
 Representative Stephan Dargan, Co-Chair Public Safety & Security Committee
 Public Safety Committee Members

Subject: **VARIOUS BILLS**

The Connecticut State Firefighters Association wishes to submit testimony on the following bills.

Our Association represents approximately 27,000 career and volunteer firefighters in the State of Connecticut.

HOUSE BILL #5644

We do not believe that changing the definition of fire duties in CGS 7-314 as proposed in this legislation will produce the desired result. We believe that this definition does not pertain to municipal liability. Please delete Section 1 of this bill. Please see our written testimony.

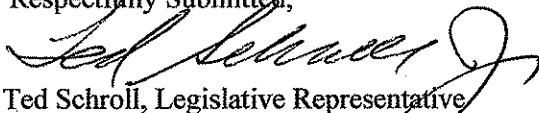
HOUSE BILL #6327

We support the efforts to increase the E-911 surcharge as proposed in this legislation. Please see our written testimony.

SENATE BILL #551

We support this legislation and any efforts to enable municipalities to allow their volunteer firefighters to serve their communities. Please see our written testimony

Respectfully Submitted,


 Ted Schroll, Legislative Representative
 Connecticut State Firefighters Association



CONNECTICUT STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

February 15, 2011

Senator Joan Hartley, Co-Chair Public Safety & Security Committee

Representative Stephan Dargan, Co-Chair Public Safety & Security Committee

Public Safety Committee Members

Subject: **HOUSE BILL #5644**

The Connecticut State Firefighters Association has some concerns with **House Bill #5644, AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**, as proposed.

Our Association represents approximately 27,000 career and volunteer firefighters in the State of Connecticut.

WE WISH TO ADDRESS OUR REMARKS TO SECTION 1 OF THIS PROPOSAL.

This writer has had a conversation with the proponent of this bill. This section of the bill arises from a concern from a career Fire Department. It is anticipated that this proposal would "expand the protection from liability granted to persons providing emergency medical services". We would suggest that career fire personnel are already covered for any liability through CGS 7-101a which affords liability protection to "any municipal employee". We would also suggest that any and all duties assigned to a career firefighter would fall under the heading of "fire duty". This is what they do; whether firefighting or dispatching of emergency services provided by that fire department.

We would suggest that the definition of "fire duties" as used within CGS 7-314, 7-314a, & 7-314b of the General Statutes collectively pertains to **workers' compensation benefits for volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance services**. They do not mention liability coverage. These explanations/definitions of fire duties are required for workers' comp benefits because, unlike career firefighters who are on duty, volunteer firefighters are only "on duty" when called. Their onset of "fire duties" is variable and must be defined as in 7-314.

Opening up the definition of fire duties to include dispatching, creates other concerns. In many fire departments, dispatching duties are, in many instances, performed by civilian or police personnel. It is difficult to understand how a civilian or police officer could be performing "fire duties" as part of their regular assignments at a dispatch center. We would assume that civilian personnel would have liability coverage through the municipality who employs them; again CGS 7-101a. Additionally, 7-314 does have the caveat at the end of the definition of fire duties that states "and any other duty ordered to be performed by a superior or commanding officer in the fire department." Certainly, dispatching duties fall within that caveat.

There is, of course, possible legislative intent that is not clear from the proposed bill, but we would like to suggest that including "dispatching duties" within this statute will not provide for additional liability for individuals.

WE WOULD ASK THAT YOU DELETE SECTION 1 OF THIS BILL.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully Submitted,


Ted Schroll, Legislative Representative
Connecticut State Firefighters Association



CONNECTICUT STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

February 15, 2011

Senator Joan Hartley, Co-Chair Public Safety & Security Committee

Representative Stephan Dargan, Co-Chair Public Safety & Security Committee

Public Safety Committee Members

Subject: **HOUSE BILL #6327**

The Connecticut State Firefighters Association wishes to go on record in support of **House Bill #6327, AN ACT INCREASING THE STATUTORY SURCHARGE CAP FOR THE ENHANCED EMERGENCY 9-1-1 PROGRAM.**

Our Association represents approximately 27,000 career and volunteer firefighters in the State of Connecticut.

We recognize that our members' response to emergencies starts when a 911 dispatcher receives a call. Their skill in extracting important information, advising distraught callers about the critical next steps to take, providing appropriate medical counseling, quickly dispatching the appropriate resources, and apprising responders of changing conditions while they are en route, often makes the difference between a successful outcome and a tragedy. They are truly our first responders.

But our 911 system is outdated and in need of modernization to provide responders with a wide range of information not possible to obtain today. Communications technology has undergone a digital revolution, but we operate a 911 system that cannot receive text messages, video streams from cell phones, or direct feed from telematic systems in automobiles involved in accidents. Connecticut has been a leader among states in 911 technology and systems, but is at risk of being unable to fund system improvements that are being considered by many other states.

The 911 surcharge on assessable lines has reached its statutory maximum of fifty cents per month. This amount is one quarter of the surcharge allowable in some of our neighboring states and among the lowest in the nation. The purpose of H.B. #6327 is to permit the maximum allowable surcharge to rise to seventy-five cents per month. The actual amount assessed depends on the charges allowed by the DPUC, and is expected to rise slowly once the needed infrastructure improvements are made. The surcharge also provides the funds that are used to incentivize regionalization of 911 call handling services. Regionalization has been highly successful in Connecticut and is being broadly promoted to create additional savings for municipalities. Promoting regionalization without incentives is less likely to succeed than if the incentives can continue.

Our 911 system has served Connecticut very well, but we believe that a Next Generation 911 system will not only serve Connecticut better, but will prevent our state from falling behind others.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ted Schroll, Legislative Representative
Connecticut State Firefighters Association



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February 15, 2011

Senator Joan Hartley, Co-Chair Public Safety & Security Committee

Representative Stephan Dargan, Co-Chair Public Safety & Security Committee

All Public Safety Committee Members

Subject: **SENATE BILL #551**

The Connecticut State Firefighters Association wishes to go on record in support of **Senate Bill #551, AN ACT CONCERNING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND AMBULANCE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS EMPLOYED IN THE STATE.**

Our Association represents approximately 27,000 career and volunteer firefighters in the State of Connecticut.

The language of this proposal seems to indicate this legislation would make it easier for qualified volunteer firefighters and ambulance personnel to support the communities in which they work. We feel that this proposal would also be advantageous for employers by lowering the costs of municipal government thereby lowering the employers cost of doing business.

It would appear that there are no requirements or mandates applicable to either the employer or the municipality. Current statute does not require the municipality to accept the services of said volunteer, and new language in the proposed legislation provides that "the employee obtained prior authorization from his or her employer".

There is, of course, possible legislative intent that is not clear from the proposed bill, but we would like to suggest that the intent of this bill would be of benefit to both employers and municipalities. It is well known that municipalities that rely on volunteer emergency services have manpower deficiencies during the daytime hours. This bill is an attempt to negate those deficiencies.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ted Schroll, Legislative Representative
Connecticut State Firefighters Association